

# International Standards, Social Certification, & Sustainable Agriculture

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## Overview

- ***Can social certification improve work and safety conditions for agricultural workers?***
  - ⌚ Overview of major international efforts
  - ⌚ Social certification & sustainable agriculture
  - ⌚ Potentials, strengths, & concerns
  - ⌚ Insights from research in California

## Social certification

- Voluntary, codes of conduct
- Consumer-dependent
- types certification (Gereffi et al. 2001)
  - ⊗ First-party: single firm
  - ⊗ Second-party: industry or trade association
  - ⊗ **Third-party: external group imposes rules and compliance on industry or firm**
  - ⊗ Fourth-party: government or multilateral agency's voluntary standards for other

## Major international certification initiatives in agriculture

- Social Accountability Int'l (SAI)
- Rainforest Alliance (RA)
- Fairtrade Labelling Organizations Int'l (FLO)
- Int'l Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
- EUREPGAP

## SAI – SA 8000

- SAI: accreditation body
- SA 8000: the standard
  - ⊗ Social Certification
  - ⊗ 39 industries; 39 countries
  - ⊗ 17 agriculture operations certified (4.8% of total)
  - ⊗ Full audits every 3 yrs
- Certification of the farming operation
  - ⊗ Dole pineapples, bananas (Philippines), Chiquita bananas (CR), Fairview wine (South Africa)
- No label used at retail level

## SA 8000: key components of standard

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • Child labor   | • Discrimination     |
| • Forced labor  | • Discipline         |
| • Health and safety   | • Working hours      |
| • Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining | • Compensation       |
|   | • Management systems |

[Based on ILO conventions, when applicable]

## Rainforest Alliance

- Social & environmental certification program
  - ⊗ Certifies farms, not company or product
  - ⊗ At least yearly audits by RA
  - ⊗ Farmers pay for certification
- Programs for: bananas, citrus, cocoa, coffee, flowers & ferns
- Approx. 15% of all internationally traded bananas from RA farms

## RA: key social criteria

- 9 general standards, only 1 re: workers
    - ⊗ **Fair treatment and good conditions for workers**
  - standards cover 5 areas
    - ⊗ Specific standards for each crop
1. Social policy
  2. Hiring practices
  3. Freedom of expression & right to organize
  4. Occupational health & safety
  5. Housing & basic services

## Fair Trade (FLO)

- Certification of 'trade relationship' between exporters and importers
- Small & large scale farms eligible
- 3 areas of certification: social, economic, & environmental development
- coffee, tea, rice, bananas, juice, fresh fruit, honey, cocoa, wine, sugar...
- 389 producer groups (~800,000 families) in 50 countries... sales in 19 countries

## FLO: generic standards for hired labor

### SOCIAL (follows ILO)

- Development potential
- Non-discrimination
- No Forced labor & child labor
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Conditions of employment
- Occupational health & safety

### ECONOMIC

- Fairtrade premium
- Export ability

## IFOAM (organic)

- Controversial since beginning
- What does 'organic' mean?
  - ⊗ Assumptions/Misconceptions
  - ⊗ Reduction of agrochemicals
- IFOAM Basic Standards
  - ⊗ Debate among IFOAM members
  - ⊗ Chapter 8: Social Justice
  - ⊗ Not being enforced yet

## Basic Standards, Chapter 8 3 components

- **General Principle:** Social justice and social rights are an integral part of organic agriculture and processing.
- **Recommendations:** e.g.,
  - ⊗ ILO conventions, UN Charter of Rights for Children
  - ⊗ Provide Maternity, sickness, retirement benefits
  - ⊗ Protect from noise, dust, light, chemicals
- **Requirements**

## Chapter 8 Requirements

- Operators must have a policy on social justice
- Organic production cannot violate human rights
- No forced or involuntary labor
- Children must have educational opportunities
- Employees and contractors have freedom of association, right to organize and collective bargaining
- No discriminatory treatment of workers or contractors

## **EUREPGAP** Euro-Retail Produce Working Group / Good Agricultural Practices

- Accredits certification bodies
- Supermarkets initiated
  - ⊗ food safety concerns & consumer accountability
- global certification program for: fruits & vegetables; flowers and ornamentals; integrated farms; aquaculture; green coffee
- fruit & veg. program: 18,000+ farms... 50+ countries... 724,000 ha.
- Business-to-business labeling only

## EUREPGAP

### fruit & vegetables: key criteria

- 14 areas evaluated
  - 1 area covers worker health, safety, and welfare
    - ⊗ 7 categories
    - ⊗ 24 specific criteria
- E.g,
- Facilities, equipment, and accident procedure
    - ⊗ are first aid boxes present in the vicinity of the work?
  - Protective clothing, equipment
  - Training
  - Welfare

## summary

Initiative	Type	Retail label	scope
SAI	social	no	39 industries 4.8% agriculture
RA	enviro. & social	yes	474 operations, 65,009 ha.
FLO	social, econ, & enviro.	yes	50 countries ~800,000 families
IFOAM	enviro & social*	yes	Social cert. Not started yet
EUREPGAP	enviro & social	no	50+ countries 18,000+ farms

## Social certification: potentials

- Benefit from successes, experiences of other sectors, initiatives
  - ⊗ Apparel & the anti-sweatshop movement
  - ⊗ Other 3rd party certification systems
- Consumer/Citizen awareness
- Reinforce, strengthen unions and existing regulations

## Social certification: potentials (2)

### *Fair Trade banana example:*

- Economic returns to small-scale producer organization
  - ⊗ \$1.75 per box premium
  - ⊗ 1000 boxes per container x 3 containers x 4 wks
  - ⊗ up to \$21,000 per month
- Extra money could be used for:
  - ⊗ Training
  - ⊗ Equipment
  - ⊗ Improvements in production practices
  - ⊗ Strengthening organizational capacity

## Social certification: concerns

- Voluntary--incentives to growers/operators may be indirect
- Expense to growers
- Role of workers in certification process/impact of process (Frank 2003; O'Rourke 2003; Getz and Shreck 2004)
  - ⊗ Participatory?
  - ⊗ Empowering?
  - ⊗ Safe?

## Social certification: concerns (2)

- Reliance on consumer trends
  - Europe vs US
  - ⊗ Label fatigue among consumers
- Focus on export agriculture
  - ⊗ what about workers not in export sector?
- Tension between certification and unions
  - ⊗ Undermine union's work?
  - ⊗ Participation of unions in developing standards?

## Conclusions

- Research on organic movement in California
  - ⊗ CCOF has opposed labor standards
  - ⊗ 57% of growers oppose or strongly oppose adding criteria addressing working conditions
  - ⊗ Strong opposition to handweeding legislation in CA

## Conclusions (2)

- Attention to working conditions increasing
  - ⊗ More internationally, but also US-based
  - ⊗ National Campaign: Social Justice WG
- Similarities and differences between initiatives
- Very little research on the impact on workers
  - ⊗ Which stakeholders are involved in different initiatives?
  - ⊗ How do the workers experience certification?
  - ⊗ What are main benefits for workers?
  - ⊗ How are violations enforced?

## for more information...

- SAI/SA 8000 standard
  - ⌚ [www.sai-intl.org](http://www.sai-intl.org)
- Rainforest Alliance
  - ⌚ [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)
- FLO
  - ⌚ [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)
- IFOAM
  - ⌚ [www.ifoam.org](http://www.ifoam.org)
- EUREPGAP
  - ⌚ [www.eurep.org](http://www.eurep.org)